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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior listings.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An actuator assembly, comprising:  
a telescopic member ~~gas spring~~ defining an axis, ~~said gas spring comprising a shaft and a gas cylinder;~~  
a linear electric motor ~~comprising a slidable rotor external to said gas cylinder and a stator~~ attached to said telescopic member ~~gas spring~~ along said axis such that operation of said linear electric motor drives said telescopic member ~~gas spring~~ between an extended and a retracted position.
2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The actuator assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein said telescopic member ~~gas spring~~ is biased toward said extended position.
3. (CANCELED)
4. (CANCELED)
5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The actuator assembly as recited in claim 4, wherein ~~said slidable rotor is drivable along a said stator having~~ comprises a substantially U-shape in cross section.
6. (ORIGINAL) The actuator assembly as recited in claim 1, further comprising a controller in communication with said linear electric motor to drive said telescopic member between said extended and said retracted position.
7. (ORIGINAL) The actuator assembly as recited in claim 6, further comprising a remote to transmit a position signal to said controller.

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8. (ORIGINAL) A vehicle closure member, comprising:  
a gas spring defining an axis, said gas spring biased toward an extended position, one end of said gas spring mounted to a vehicle liftgate and an opposite end of said gas spring mounted to a vehicle body, said gas spring movable between said extended position and a retracted position;  
and  
a linear electric motor attached to said gas spring along said axis such that operation of said linear electric motor drives said gas spring between an extended and a retracted position.
9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The vehicle closure member as recited in claim 8, wherein said linear electric motor ~~includes~~ comprises a slidable rotor mounted to a cylinder of said gas spring.
10. (ORIGINAL) The vehicle closure member as recited in claim 9, wherein said slidable rotor is drivable along a stator having a substantially U-shape in cross section.
11. (ORIGINAL) The vehicle closure member as recited in claim 8, further comprising a controller in communication with said linear electric motor to drive said telescopic member between said extended and said retracted position.
12. (ORIGINAL) The vehicle closure member as recited in claim 11, further comprising a remote to transmit a position signal to said controller.

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13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of actuating a closure member having a gas spring comprising the steps of:

- (1) attaching a linear electric motor ~~comprising a slidable rotor and a stator~~ to a gas spring along a common axis, ~~said slidable rotor external to the gas cylinder~~;
- (2) operating the linear electric motor to drive a gas spring between a retracted and an extended position; and
- (3) driving the gas spring with the linear electric motor to move a closure member between an open and a closed position.

14. (ORIGINAL) A method of actuating a closure member as recited in claim 13, further comprising the step of counterbalancing the closure member with the gas spring.

15. (ORIGINAL) A method of actuating a closure member as recited in claim 13, further comprising the step of operating the linear electric motor to drive the closure member to a locked position.

16. (ORIGINAL) A method of actuating a closure member as recited in claim 13, further comprising the step of operating the linear electric motor to hold the closure member in a desired position.

17. (ORIGINAL) A method of actuating a closure member as recited in claim 13, further comprising the step of remotely actuating the linear electric motor.

18. (NEW) The actuator assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein said stator telescopes over said gas cylinder.

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19. (NEW) The actuator assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein said stator is fixed adjacent an end segment of said shaft.

20. (NEW) The vehicle closure member as recited in claim 8, wherein said linear electric motor comprises a slidable rotor mounted to a stator which telescopes over a gas cylinder.

21. (NEW) The vehicle closure member as recited in claim 8, wherein said gas spring comprising a shaft and a gas cylinder and said linear electric motor comprises a slidable rotor drivable along a stator fixed adjacent an end segment of a shaft.

22. (NEW) A method of actuating a closure member as recited in claim 13, wherein said step 2) further comprises telescoping the stator over the gas cylinder.

23. (NEW) A method of actuating a closure member as recited in claim 13, wherein said step 1) further comprises fixing the stator adjacent an end segment of a shaft extending from the gas cylinder.

24. (NEW) A method of actuating a closure member as recited in claim 13, wherein said step 1) further comprises fixing the rotor adjacent an end segment of the gas cylinder.